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ABSTRACT

A method of establishing a successful inservice teacher education program is described. This method involves organizational change as well as individual change based on the assumption that teacher growth and school change are interdependent. The following set of constructs for a responsive inservice teacher education program are identified: (1) all inservice efforts should include required work that focuses the teacher's concentration on the classroom; (2) all inservice work should attempt to combine theory and practice; (3) all inservice work should assist the teacher to develop, integrate, or alter the concepts and techniques learning through classroom implementation and practice with the assistance of an instructor; and (4) inservice instructors should tailor concepts and techniques to the particular school organization for successful continuation and incorporation. (JD)

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**SYSTEMATIC AD-HOCISM: AN APPROACH TO
RESPONSIVE INSERVICE EDUCATION AND SCHOOL CHANGE**

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SYSTEMATIC AD-HOCISM: AN APPROACH TO RESPONSIVE INSERVICE EDUCATION AND SCHOOL CHANGE

Introduction

The seemingly contradictory concept of "systematic ad-hocism" was developed by Miller and Wolf at the University of Massachusetts/Worcester Public Schools Teacher Corps Project and elucidated in the article, "Inservice Education and School Change" (1977) and again in "Staff Development for School Change: Theory and Practice" (1978). The author of this paper was a member of that Teacher Corps staff and involved in enacting the concept.

In the next several pages, we will focus on (1) aspects of our mode of responsive inservice education, (2) ways in which we dealt with organizational/institutional change, and (3) what we believe to be some staff operational needs to implement the concepts successfully.

The concept of systematic ad-hocism is based on some research-based assumptions about inservice education, school organizations and the nature of organizational and individual change. The first and most important assumption is that teacher growth and school change are interdependent - each occurs "most effectively and lastingly in a situation that supports" and encourages the other (all references are to Miller & Wolf, 1977, 1978 except where otherwise specified).

The second assumption is that change is best viewed "in terms of development from individual to organizational concerns" (1978 per the CBAM and I/D/E/A studies). Incorporated in this assumption is that the encouragement of "dialogue among teachers who have taken individual actions" leads to collaborative actions -- a type of school change. This phenomenon is "developmental and cyclical" (1978).

A third assumption is a three-part view of inservice education. Inservice education programs must at once be (1) responsive to stated needs, (2) somehow involve both theory and practice, and (3) allow multiple entry and exit points for

the teaching staff through and with multiple delivery systems. A fuller discussion of these assumptions can be found in the two articles by Miller and Wolf and in McSanghlin et al (1974) and Mann (1977).

Systematic Ad-Hocism

The four primary characteristics of systematic ad-hocism are based on the assumptions outlined above. Miller and Wolf emphasize "maps" or conceptualizations of the system under examination and the changes sought vs. "itineraries" or prescriptions. For example, a prescription is "implement the Engleman-Bereiter Reading Program" vs. the conceptualization of a goal "improve reading instruction in the school." The former alternative locks the change attempt to a single alternative and freezes or staticizes the change process. The latter alternative allows for greater flexibility in designing or altering approaches to solving the problem over time.

The second characteristic of systematic ad-hocism is "forecasting alternate futures." This helps in better understanding the system within which the change effort operates, to determine "important decision points that will be reached in the future," and to begin to "choose amongst what may be unforeseeable and surprising alternatives in the future." This kind of long term planning and forecasting provides a context for devising short range solutions to complex problems as they manifest themselves over time.

The third characteristic is called "adaptive planning" by Miller and Wolf. Adaptive planning is both being adaptive to the kinds of decisions that are faced through forecasting alternate futures and active and challenging responsiveness to people and situations in the environment of the school.

The final characteristic of systematic ad-hocism is that it is "value-based." Project staff operate from their own convictions about education, schools and change. The project becomes an arena in which these personal values are tested, risks taken,

and in which personal learning and growth takes place.

Operating with the systematic ad hoc approach to change is a gradualist change strategy. This strategy involves:

"(1) lower levels of uncertainty and unintended outcomes, (2) decreased time pressure, (3) an increased interval for major change, (4) limited decisions related to the changes, and (5) decreased demand on resources" (Smith and Keith, 1971).

As with most good theories or frameworks concerning educational practice, good practitioners were utilizing aspects of the concept of "systematic ad-hocism" before it was ever formulated. In addition, aspects of the concept can be found in notions of responsive inservice education (Edelfelt, 1974), and in Mann's change strategies (1974, 1977) as well as in the work of others. However, for Teacher Corps projects and other similarly structured programs of inservice education/school change, we have found that a systematic ad hoc approach to change serves as a most appropriate organizational vehicle through which other concepts and ideas may be funnelled.

It should be noted here that a Teacher Corps project organized around the idea of "systematic adaptation of research findings" as ours was increased the difficulty of applying concepts of responsive inservice change. Identifying goals that specify areas of research findings to be adapted in the site school based on needs assessment, launching extensive searches for appropriate research-validated models, research findings and sources of "live" research data and consulting personnel to function within those areas identified; and determining the appropriateness of the data collected for the school and its population is a massive undertaking. Our ability to execute rapid responses to new needs and directions often became limited by the kinds of expertise and data bases found among the staff in critical areas, among our immediate pool of consultants (mostly uni-

versity faculty), and other known colleagues.

Responsive Inservice Education

The greater volume of the literature dealing with the concept of responsive inservice education concentrates on two areas: direct response to stated staff needs and designing inservice delivery systems for multi-path access by staff. Though we agree that these are two of the most critical areas to be explored in responsiveness, by no means do we consider them the only areas of importance. Of equal importance are surfacing and facing inter and intra-system conflicts (university-school system, teacher-administrator, academic-nonacademic, regular curricula-special needs, school-community, white-non-white, ideas about student choice-choice confining policies and structures, etc.), creating mechanisms for teacher ownership and control, and issuing value and programmatic challenges to teachers and the school in important areas of concern (i.e. concern over the education of non-white students but not implementing multicultural education).

Inservice education programs should be structured to respond directly to stated staff needs. The needs that grew from our initial needs assessment (see accompanying paper) in order of priority were: (1) inservice work in and research-validated models of individualization for junior high schools, (2) inservice work and research findings in teaching reading in content areas, (3) inservice work in and research findings concerning teaching and handling of special needs students in regular classrooms, (4) coordination of special needs programs, (5) greater teacher and school-within-a-school professional decision-making responsibility, and (6) improved intra-staff communication.

For the first need area (individualization), there was no one in the university faculty with the necessary expertise and our searches outside of the university revealed no one with appropriate expertise and experience. Faculty members at the

university were given responsibility for inservice work and research data in content area reading instruction and mainstreaming and special needs. The final three areas of identified needs were passed on to the principal for his information and consideration. These were our direct responses to stated needs accompanied by promises to continue to seek data and consultants in individualization.

Another type of direct response to stated needs developed after the above responses were finalized. One small group of teachers approached the staff requesting inservice work in early adolescent development. We responded by allowing them to organize a plan with a university faculty member whose areas of expertise were in moral development and adolescent development.

The Chairperson of the English Department next approached the staff with a course outline for the teaching of writing and the name of an instructor all agreed to by her department members. We simply told her to go ahead and set it up.

We also conducted a summer inservice program for curriculum development in which we finally responded to the individualization needs through the provision of two university-based and two public school-based IGE (Individually Guided Education) consultants to assist teachers in individualizing their curriculum through a choice of three individualizing formats. We also used this time to provide instruction in classroom management -- which had been identified as a teacher need after the initial needs assessment.

The design of inservice programs is the second critical aspect of responsive inservice education. We began with a set of constructs for the organization of inservice strands which we attempted to pass on to our instructors. These constructs are that (1) all inservice efforts should attempt to combine theory and practice, (2) all inservice courses should include required work that focuses the teacher back into the classroom, (3) all inservice work should assist the teacher to develop, integrate, or alter the concepts and techniques learned through class-

room implementation and practice with the assistance of the instructor, and (4) inservice instructors should tailor concepts and techniques to the particular school organization for successful continuation and incorporation. In spite of the specificity with which these four constructs were communicated, two instructors merely transplanted their regular university-based graduate courses -- lock, stock and barrel -- to the site school. Teacher reaction was swift and hard. A series of conversations with one instructor resulted in retailoring. With the other instructor, a vocally violent confrontation was required to achieve the necessary change.

Those inservice efforts that resulted in positive teacher evaluation, implementation of new curricula and techniques were characterized by our four inservice constructs and, in addition, they were individualized.

A final word about designing inservice programs. We have found that there is no one perfect or "correct" approach to responsive inservice if for no other reason than that teachers are individuals with different needs and response modes. Our inservice delivery system can be characterized as a "multi-path" system (Miller and Wolf, 1978) which includes: (1) formal graduate courses tailored to our four constructs for inservice efforts, (2) short-term non-credit workshops, (3) released-time sessions, (4) school visitation to observe exemplary practices in identified need areas, (5) attendance at professional conferences designed around identified project needs, (6) the provision of consultants in the school to work with teachers on specific tasks, (7) informal interactions between project staff and teachers, (8) the provision of collections of research reports in specific areas, and (9) working with formalized school groupings (teams and departments).

With these several delivery mechanisms, the project can respond to individual and group teacher needs, can allow for differing levels of teacher involvement,

and allow for "multiple entry and exit points" (Miller and Wolf, 1978).

Conflicts and gaps exist in any school organization. In many cases, school staffs are quite aware of these conflicts and gaps. However, they are rarely dealt with openly. We believe that a third clear function of an inservice education/school change project is to surface and openly expose conflicts and gaps. For example, we opened with the principal the conflict between his administrative style (centralized, no appeal decision making) and his new organization of teaching teams in a school-within-a-school format. We also attempted to initiate interaction between so called "academic area teachers" (science, math, English, social studies) and other teachers (phys. ed., home economics, industrial arts, music and art) over their obvious conflicts on power and placement in the school's decision-making processes. Some research has demonstrated that if conflicts such as these are not resolved, change will not take place. or if it does take place, it will not last or become incorporated (Mann, 1976; Sarason, 1971). Thus, the necessity of this role in inservice education.

In our view, the fourth critical aspect of responsive inservice education is teacher ownership and control. This idea is a subtle strand in all of the articles in a Special Issue of the Teachers College Record, Staff Development: New Demands, New Realities, New Perspectives (Vol. 80, No. 1, September 1978). The UNH/Portsmouth Teacher Corps Project created "leadership teams" composed of school staff in several areas of identified needs to constantly assess and refine school and staff needs and to evaluate project efforts. Their role is being expanded in the present year to include responsibility for released-time programs, identification of problem areas, schools to visit, etc. These teams are being provided formal budgets to execute their tasks.

Finally, the fifth of our major aspects of responsive inservice education is the issuing of value and programmatic challenges to teachers, the school and school

system in areas of critical concern or importance. Miller and Wolf and others (unpublished documents, 1975-1977) have stated that one important purpose of programs like Teacher Corps is to introduce new questions into the school environment. In our project, we have sought to accomplish this purpose through several means. First, new questions -- particularly in relation to multicultural and organizational issues -- have been introduced through personal, individual interactions with school personnel. Many of our inservice strands have also included issue and programmatic challenges as vital parts of the effort.

Organizational/Institutional Change

We stated in the introductory section that one of the assumptions that 'systematic ad-hocism' is based on is that change is best viewed as a process that develops from individual to organizational concerns. Our view of 'systematic ad-hocism' couples this assumption with a gradualist change strategy. The best application of this aspect of the concept for developing organizational changes is in traditionally organized schools in which significant changes have not occurred in recent history. Our experience demonstrates that teachers in this situation exist in isolation from each other (Sarason, 1971) and that their concerns are strictly individual and usually reactive. Change naturally must begin with individual concerns.

However, our project entered a secondary school that had recently been radically reorganized by the principal. Two major changes had been instituted in his first year. The school had been reorganized into four schools-within-the-school organized around core subject area teams. The principal, simultaneous with this change, abolished all forms of ability grouping by randomly grouping students heterogeneously.

Teachers and other staff had been forced by these changes to work together in the organization of curriculum and programs for a year prior to the arrival of

Teacher Corps. Teachers had also been literally blown out of any purely individual concerns to their collective organizational concerns. We were obviously entering a situation in which the process of change perceived purely as one beginning with individual concerns and moving toward organizational concerns was not adequate.

Many of the concerns and issues raised in the initial needs assessment period focused on organizational/institutional areas. Much of this was reactive to the largely unilateral decision making of the principal but, nonetheless, teachers were focused on organizational concerns. Project staff then began to gather informal data on the school's organizational characteristics including: organizational strains, sub-system overlaps and conflicts, organizational design vs. teacher predilections, institutional structure vs. staff values, and other dimensions.

Next, the staff began to conceptualize and plan for the many project goals that developed from the initial needs assessment and mandated Teacher Corps goals. These goals were stated earlier (pp. 4-5). This is the point at which broad maps or conceptualizations of changes sought entered their developmental stages. Initial prescriptions were created. In most cases the prescriptions were multiple. For example, to institute individualized curricula and teaching practices, several different roads were used. These included inservice courses, consultants to individual teachers, funding pilot programs, providing research materials, and encouraging individual teacher attempts.

The project's design for implementing multicultural education best exemplifies the mapping approach. Our primary prescription consisted of: (1) initial curriculum and school environment assessment, (2) organizing parent-teacher work groups to discuss the findings of the assessment, (3) organizing inservice activities by academic departments or other school organizational segments, (4) providing technical assistance to teachers and administrators in instituting new curricula and

organizational patterns, and (5) periodic assessment of change in the school's curriculum and environment. Included in the overall maps were: (1) new forms of parental and community involvement, (2) instituting experiential components in critical subject areas.

During the needs assessment and planning stage, the issue of multicultural education was raised among school staff members. It became apparent that most of the teachers equated multicultural education with Black studies and that they were somewhat resistant to the idea. This, of course, nullified our initial prescription. Standard conceptions of teacher ownership in inservice education would have also nullified the multicultural component of the project. The maintenance of our conceptualization of multicultural educational change reclined its justification from our role as raisers of new questions and issues in the school environment. In short, the issues, problems and concerns related to multicultural education would continually be raised in other inservice activities and in project staff interactions with school personnel. In this way, our prescriptions for multicultural education would become "ad-hoc." We capitalize on any interest generated or "cracks" in the value dispositions of the staff, tensions between school and community or standard organizational activities.

Within this approach, several activities and events have occurred in the life of the project under the rubric of multicultural education. They are presented below in sequence:

1. The author, with the principal, identified a list of teachers who might be prone to learning about multicultural education.
2. The author initiated brief and informal conversations with these teachers about issues related to multicultural education.
3. After the project was successfully underway, other teachers raised questions with the author about multicultural education.

4. The local Equal Educational Opportunities Committee (which was responsible in large part for the development of the proposal) angrily queried as to the status of multicultural education in the project and in the school.
5. The author shared the EEO's query with a few teachers.
6. A released-time session was held on multicultural education using a white generalist as a consultant. This dispelled some teacher fears and myths about multicultural education.
7. Several teachers reinitiated dialogue on the topic after the released-time session and requested information and materials.
8. In the second semester of the first year, a two-credit introductory workshop on Multicultural Education was conducted with ten teacher participants.
9. A three-session workshop was offered to parents during the same time period attended by 19 people.
10. A three-day workshop was offered during our Summer Inservice program attended by 15 teachers.
11. During the first semester of the second year, a two-credit multicultural curriculum development workshop was offered and attended by eight teachers.
12. The principal requested multicultural assessments of sample social studies, world and U.S. history textbooks to aid in making large materials purchases.
13. During all of this time, the author and others have been in the process of planning a system-wide conference on multicultural education.

The results of these activities are that: (1) substantive changes in the curriculum and teaching approaches of 28 teachers have been implemented, (2) significant multicultural learning is in evidence in nearly every subject area (except science and industrial arts) and in every suborganization in the school (including reading, Title I and special education programs, (3) most teachers have multicultural curriculum development materials in their possession, and (4) the principal has taken

a strong public stand against any form of prejudice or discrimination among faculty and students. This set of prescribed activities have been ad-hoc in that they have developed unplanned through capitalizing on unexpected events or the initiatives and indiscretions of others. These activities have been systematic in that collectively they approach the pre-conceptualization of formally institutionalizing new curricula and teaching approaches that meet multicultural criteria. The request to review textbooks for potential purpose has been well accepted by the school staff and has prompted the staff to discuss the possibility of pursuing formal curriculum changes.

A description of another project change effort will further explain our systematic and ad-hoc approach to institutional change. The first pilot program funded by the project was an ungraded 7th and 8th grade math program in one of the four schools-within-the-school. Our initial evaluation of this program demonstrated strong academic success matched by strongly positive student opinions. Other approaches to math included some traditional teacher-centered and some individualized approaches and one peer-tutoring format. Particularly in the traditional math approaches, it was evident that gifted students' and lower ability students' needs went consistently unmet. It was uncertain what occurred to these students in other approaches. Simultaneous with the collection of these data, two math teachers attending a project inservice course on school-based tests and measurements decided to complete requirements for the course by constructing competency tests. Also, the principal was reluctant to continue to spend funds on the pilot ungraded math program without impact on the rest of the school's math instruction. Through several subsequent conversations between the author, project director and principal, an ad-hoc plan was developed. We decided to convince the two teachers constructing math competency tests to expand the use of the tests to the entire school to compare programs. They agreed as did all other math teachers.

The principal then decided that if testing showed clear superiority of alternative approaches over more traditional teacher-centered approaches, he would seek to identify the primary elements of success and mandate changes in math programs to encompass these elements. The project staff met and determined that the project would go on record in support of the mandate as a professionally appropriate response to the data. At this writing, testing is in process.

Project Staff Operational Requirements

Clearly, these approaches are imbedded with great personal risk to project staff members. High levels of uncertainty and ambiguity are also inherent and necessary features of these approaches to change. Staff will experience personal role ambiguity, rapid and unexpected role changes and must be constantly looking for opportunities for action. In addition to the obvious necessity of selecting staff that thrive on risk-taking, the project staff as an organizational unit must achieve some particular characteristics.

Project staff meetings must include open-ended agendas and time to allow for the naming and exploration of new activities. Any staff member should be allowed to initiate new tasks. In addition to initiating new tasks, project staff meetings must also allow for issue and theory discussions as a way of continuously matching prescriptions to conceptual goals.

Project staff leadership must remain open and task-relative. At different points in time and in particular goal and task areas, different members of the project staff will have the most appropriate expertise and/or disposition to carry out leadership functions. Although ultimate responsibility and authority will almost always rest with a project director, the primary leadership roles of the director under our systematic ad-hoc approach are orchestration and providing support for other staff members as leaders. Power struggles and pecking orders within this framework are severely debilitating. Staff interrelationships must

be based on trust, professional/personal respect, open dialogue and mutual support. Intra-group power issues that do arise must be dealt with and resolved with frankness and honesty.

A third characteristic that the project staff must exemplify is the ability to cope successfully with role flux, overlaps, and role growth. The ad-hoc approach means that at many junctures individual members' roles will change through the absorption of new tasks, task redefinition, the occurrence of major individual decision-making responsibilities during particular time periods, major task completion or termination. For each member of the staff these changes lead to increased role ambiguity, role overlap with other members, periods of authority dominance, periods of subordination and followership, and periods of high personal risk. Anxiety over these occurrences create the necessity of often combining personal needs with project tasks and decision making. At junctures such as these, the project staff needs the ability to successfully deliberate on project activities combined with personal needs without short-changing either.

Summary

In the preceding pages we have attempted to outline the four major components of the concept of "systematic ad-hocism" and the five primary characteristics of our notion of responsive inservice education/school change. In addition, we have tried to display some of the ways in which these components and characteristics have operated in the UNH/Portsmouth Teacher Corps Project. We believe that these concepts and ideas represent much of the best practical and theoretical work in the field of inservice education/school change presently available.